

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

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JOCELYN BROWN AND HER SYDNEY GARDENS OF THE '30s and '40s

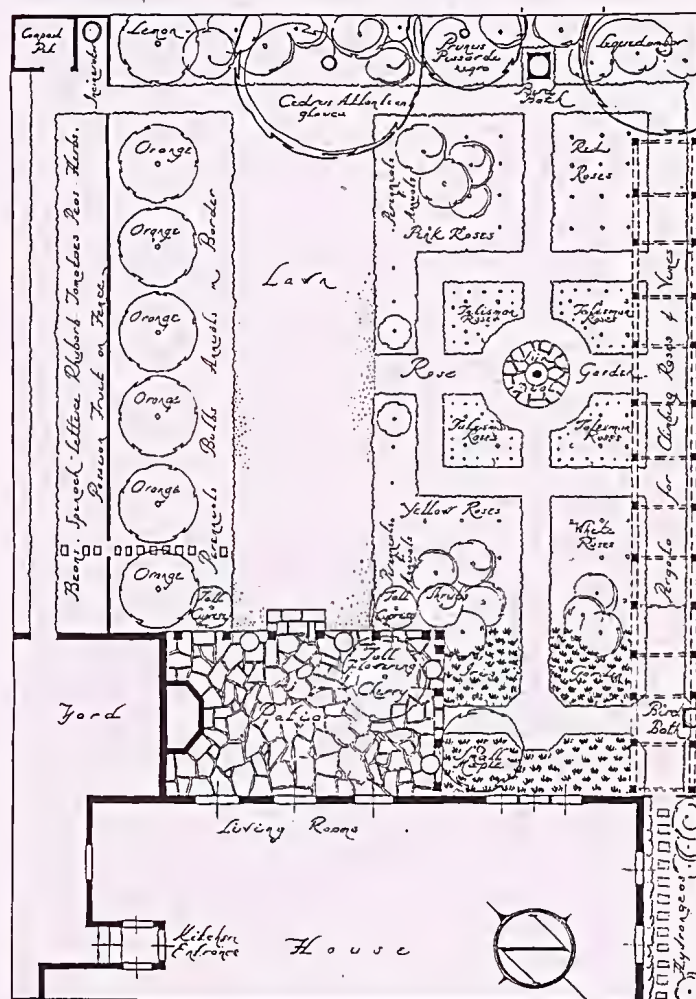
David Ottewill, in his recent book, *The Edwardian Garden*, mentions a debate held in Melbourne in 1903 between Walter Richmond Butler, an architect trained in England who had moved as a young man in the London arts and crafts circle before migrating in 1888, and Charles Bogue Luffman, principal of Melbourne's Burnley School of Horticulture. An interesting account of this debate was written previously by Marilyn McBriar for the second issue of the *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society*, winter 1981. It paralleled, with somewhat less acrimony, a debate between Reginald Blomfield and William Robinson in England, in the 1890s. Butler maintained that the suburban garden was best designed as an architectural construct, formally related to the house, with walls, steps, paved areas, straight paths and architectural details planted lavishly with flowers. Luffman, on the other hand, was an advocate for a looser, wilder garden, with a generous allowance for deep shady trees, winding paths, and garden 'overgrowth', claiming the garden should be essentially 'gothic' in feeling to complement the Federation architectural style of the day.

Both were influential in their fields, but Luffman, through his association with the Burnley School, had a greater influence on the Melbourne horticulturalists and the Melbourne garden scene.

Back in England, the more formal aspects of Edwardian garden planning continued to find expression after World War I in the layout of Welwyn Garden City, a 'new town' built near London and planned by Ebenezer Howard. Here, formal gardens and avenues, a fountain and axial designs were deliberately used to engender civic pride. Working at Welwyn with the chief architect Louis de Soissons was a young New Zealand architect, Alfred Brown, there with his Australian wife Jocelyn.

When they returned to Sydney in 1930, Jocelyn Brown began designing gardens herself, aided by a skilful eye trained by her work as a commercial artists, a 'green thumb', a love of flowering plants, and a talent for black-and-white illustration. She was influenced by her Welwyn experiences, and especially by the designs and planting techniques of Englishwoman Gertrude Jekyll. Her plans for Sydney and country gardens in New South Wales were particularly suited to the Neo-Georgian house once again fashionable in Australia between the wars.

She crystallised her ideas in a series of articles for *The Home*, an up-market stylish Sydney magazine, during the



In this section of a plan of a suburban garden published in *The Home* in March 1942, Jocelyn Brown has designed a garden with many of her major trademarks. It is rich in detail, and carefully structured by paved areas, an axial path terminating in a bird bath, a patio framed by columns near the house, a pergola and a formal rose garden. The lawn area is only a small proportion of the whole.

years 1939 and 1942. In these she discussed garden plans, favouring symmetrical incidents and axial arrangements for detailed parts of her gardens set within a looser, more informal framework. The formal, built elements of the gardens — rose gardens grouped around a sun-dial or bird-bath, paved courtyards with a small fountain as focus — were usually close to the house, the lawns and rockeries further out were planted with bulbs or alpine



One of the long grass walks at Greenwood, flanked by flower borders. The basket-pattern brick margin facilitates lawn mowing and allows small plants to spill over the edge.

plants, and contained vistas planned within the suburban garden boundaries.

Jocelyn Brown became a skilled plantswoman, creating garden 'pictures' with foliage and flowers, delighting in a lavish display of blooms, using subtle combinations of colours in her mixed borders. She specially liked silver-foliaged plants and Edwardian garden favourites — irises, campanulas, delphiniums, daffodils and lilies, old-fashioned roses and poppies.

She used water in various ways, in formally-placed fountains and in more informally shaped ponds. Unlike her contemporary, Edna Walling, she used native plants only sparingly, preferring to keep the eucalypts as backdrops to her garden plans, as at *Greenwood* and *The White House*, St Ives. She admired Professor Waterhouse's garden at *Eryldene* planned by W. Hardy Wilson, but did not emphasise camellias or azaleas in her own planting programmes.

Her special field of operation was in Sydney, at Ku-ring-gai, where she planned one of her own important gardens, *Greenwood*, on a generous sloping site adjacent to a reserve of tall eucalypts. The combination of ordered flowery walks and native forest was a particularly happy one here, and *Greenwood*, further embellished by later owners, remains today a notable garden in the Ku-ring-gai tradition.

She designed gardens on commission, some in Sydney, some in country areas of New South Wales. Many of her Sydney gardens have unfortunately disappeared, overtaken by suburban subdivision, others have been much simplified. Several fine country gardens, however, have survived splendidly — for example, *Coolibah*, near Young, and *Checkers*, near Cango.

In preparing a book on Jocelyn Brown's work*, to be published by Kangaroo Press in October this year, I found the subject offered a perspective on the design history of the inter-war period. The gardens and their planting styles were designed to complement the Colonial Revivalist architecture advocated by W. Hardy-Wilson, J.L. Berry, John D. Moore, F. Glynn Gilling, and Leslie

Wilkinson, a style which was disseminated amongst the well-heeled middle classes through the pages of *The Home and Art in Australia*. The articles she wrote for *The Home*, the reminiscences of the gardens written by her husband, her accomplished line drawings, and the plans of her gardens all evoke the period of the thirties and forties. Even her flower arrangements, expressing one of the social graces of the forties, speak of their times.

Jocelyn Brown's work represents the efforts of a garden designer in the great age of the suburban garden in Australia. These gardens were formed at a time when the suburban life was extolled as the ideal by politicians, town planners, and real estate agents alike, and the construction of the city railway network made the whole thing possible. The garden city movement depended upon thousands of suburban gardeners, and, in turn, they depended upon the garden writers of the day, who influenced the style and shape of their gardens.

Thus Jocelyn Brown's influence extended further than her surviving gardens would seem to suggest, and to trace her gardening career has been a source of instruction as well as interest.

Helen Proudfoot

* *Gardens in Bloom: Jocelyn Brown and her Sydney Gardens of the '30s and '40s*, by Helen Proudfoot, published by Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, N.S.W. 1989.

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Protection for Victoria's Gardens

A review of the Historic Buildings Act 1981 was recently undertaken by the Ministry for Planning and Environment and the Historic Buildings Council.

The AGHS Victorian Branch was invited to participate in the preliminary consultation to review the Act. The terms of reference for this review encompassed a number of issues, only one of which was particularly relevant to our Society, namely:

Investigate and make recommendations on the capacity under the Act to provide protection for historic sites and other places such as gardens, whether or not associated with a registered building.

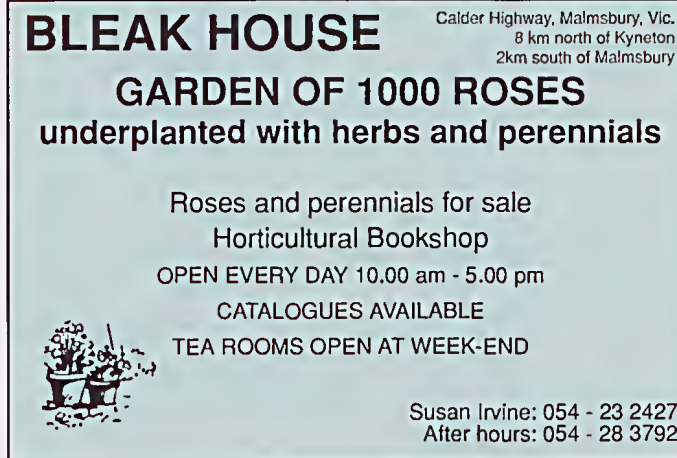
The issue had arisen because the present Act can only provide protection for gardens where they are associated with a registered building.

The AGHS took the view that, where a garden was registered the garden's owner must be in agreement, and that the Ministry must have sufficient expertise to administer any statutory protection.

Following the preliminary consultation the AGHS received a copy of a discussion paper. A number of options were put forward with regard to registration of gardens. Two options were considered appropriate by the AGHS; the first allowed for nomination by the owner and/or a third party, and the second allowed for nomination by the owner only. This was considered the most realistic option.



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Landscape Gardener, Perth

Jeremiah Sheath (1850-1915) was born on the Isle of Wight. He is thought to have trained at Kew Gardens in England and among the testimonials he brought to Australia was one from the famous Chelsea nursery of James Veitch and Sons. Jeremiah Sheath arrived in Western Australia in December 1885 and took up an appointment at Government House. Miss Eucharis Sheath his youngest daughter whom he named after his favourite flower, the Eucharis Lily of South America, believed that he had been brought to Western Australia to lay out the gardens of Government House. By the middle 1880s there were already mature plantings in existence in the Government House grounds, however there can be little doubt that there was much development still to be done. Unfortunately there are few official records of the gardens at this period and the extent of Jeremiah's contribution is not known.

Sheath left Government House in 1890 and in the intervening years before he took up the appointment as the first Superintendent at Kings Park in July 1904, he worked as a landscape gardener laying out the grounds of the homes of many prominent citizens in Perth and Fremantle.

By 1904, some of the earliest features in Kings Park had already been developed, such as the two main roads through the park, the limestone terraces and winding pathways down the face of Mount Eliza overlooking Perth Water and the famous avenue of Red-Flowering Gums along the main drive. The somewhat ad hoc arrangements under which this early work had been carried out were no longer adequate and a person with appropriate training permanently on hand was required.

Jeremiah Sheath was engaged at a salary of £4 per week, with accommodation. He was responsible for the maintenance of the park, the supervision and control of the park employees and was "expected to design and execute the various works approved from time to time, in accordance with the wishes of the Board".

Jeremiah Sheath remained at Kings Park until his forced retirement in November 1913. At the time of his retirement the Chairman of the Board wrote in a letter to the Premier of Western Australia:

It would be difficult to find in Australia a man with such a wide knowledge of horticulture as is possessed by Mr Sheath. He has designed & carried out many important improvements in the Park which will stand for all time as a pleasing testimony of this taste & judgement in landscape work.

Eucalyptus sheathiana is named after Jeremiah Sheath.

Oline Richards

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Interview with Miss Eucharis Lily Sheath recorded March 1985 by the Battye Library, Perth.

Kings Park Board, correspondence file. Acc No. 1067A/25 Battye Library, Perth.

WA Blue Books, 1885/86, 1890.

PRINCE ALFRED PARK SYDNEY

A Park For the Machine Age

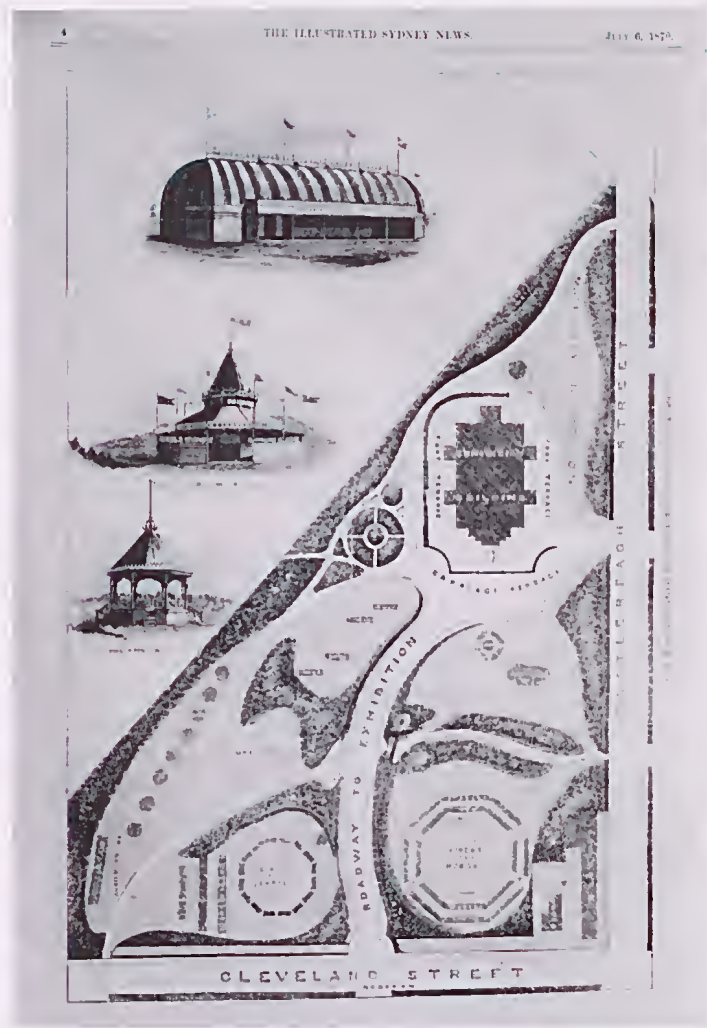
Until recently, the social and historical background of Australian parks and gardens has been, at best, only partially understood. Two often, broad generalisations have produced simplistic categorisations and this has meant that historically richer and more complex factors have gone unnoticed. It is now the task of garden historians to seek out these factors, document relevant gardens and contribute to a wider understanding of gardens in Australia's history. This article examines Sydney's *Prince Alfred Park* in the light of recent research undertaken for a conservation study commissioned by the South Sydney Council for the City of Sydney. *Richard Aitken* writes about social and historical factors which shaped the development of Prince Alfred Park, while *David Beaver* looks at the current state of the park and proposes some ideas for its conservation.

The land now comprising *Prince Alfred Park* was formally dedicated as a 'reserve for public purposes' in December 1865. At that date it was known as Cleveland Paddock, its boundaries defined by Cleveland Street, Castlereagh Street (now Chalmers Street) and the railway reserve. In 1869 the Agricultural Society of New South Wales held their exhibition on this site following many years of activity at a site in Parramatta. There was, too, following the success of exhibitions worldwide, strong public support for a grand exhibition to be held in Sydney, where exhibits would not be confined to agriculture.

The earliest international exhibition, the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of All Nations held in London's *Hyde Park* in 1851, was still fresh in the minds of many. Joseph Paxton's architecturally daring Crystal Palace had been a powerful symbol of the Empire's industrial strength and encouraged many similar exhibitions in succeeding years. Dublin and New York hosted large exhibitions in 1853 and Paris, with a tradition of industrial exhibitions pre-dating the Great Exhibition by half a century, responded with impressive and influential exhibitions in 1855 and 1867.

The earliest Australian colonial exhibition inspired by the 1851 Exhibition was held in Melbourne in 1854. It was intended as a prelude to the 1855 Paris Exhibition and achieved modest success in its aims. Sydney also held a more modest exhibition in the Museum to display exhibits destined for Paris and Melbourne. Melbourne again hosted an exhibition in 1861, this time as a means of displaying exhibits destined for the 1862 London Exhibition.

Victoria also hosted Australia's earliest intercolonial exhibition, held at Melbourne in 1866-67. A special annexe was erected at the rear of the Public Library and all the Australian colonies were represented, as well as New



Plan by Benjamin Backhouse showing layout of the grounds and sketch of the smaller pavilions.

Illustrated Sydney News, 6 July 1870

Zealand, New Caledonia and Batavia. Like the 1854 exhibition, Victoria's 1866 'Intercolonial Exhibition of Australia' also preceeded a major international exhibition, in this case the 1867 Paris *Exposition Universelle*.

To Sydney's chagrin the Melbourne exhibition was a great success and the 'mother colony' looked anxiously to the day when she could respond with a confident rejoinder. The centenary of Cooks 'discovery' of Australia in 1770 was seen as a suitable commemorative event and *Hyde Park* considered an appropriate site for an exhibition. A proposal to erect a new central railway station and use the hall for the exhibition, was considered: New South Wales had viewed Victoria's capacious temporary hall at the rear of Melbourne Public Library with envy. Even if a railway station was not erected on *Hyde Park* (as had been suggested), or even used at all for an exhibition, the proximity of the railway station and exhibition hall was seen as a necessity for practical and symbolic reasons. Ease of transport was vital for a successful show but so was the powerful symbolism of the 'iron horse', with its prefabricated iron railway tracks symptomatic of an age that had produced the Crystal Palace.



Small Picture File, Mitchell Library

Machinery becomes an integral factor of the park design and rain pours down on the spectators. The sodden ground is meanwhile further dampened by a fountain exhibited by Sydney horticultural providers Lassetter and Co.

The international success of the *Exposition Universelle* was still fresh in the memory also. 'We ought in fact, to adopt the shrewd policy of the Emperor Napoleon in the late exhibition at Paris, for three or four months of 1870 Sydney ought to be the Paris of the Southern Hemisphere', wrote one enthusiastic resident to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in October 1868. Encouraged by the success of the first Sydney exhibition of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales in 1869, *Prince Alfred Park* was chosen as the site of the grand 'Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition' of 1870.

For three or four months of 1870 Sydney sought to be the Paris of the Southern Hemisphere

For this, the park was extensively relandscaped and it was this scheme which forms the bones of the park as we know it today. The plan reproduced in the *Illustrated Sydney News* carried the name of the architect Backhouse. Benjamin Backhouse (1829-1904) had moved to Sydney in 1868 following practice in Geelong, Ballarat and Brisbane. He is known to have designed the exhibition pavilions in the grounds of *Prince Alfred Park* and it is

not unreasonable to attribute the overall design of the park to him. Apart from the design of the grounds, there was much horticultural interest in the 1870 Exhibition itself. Prominent Sydney nurserymen, P.L.C. Shepherd, John Baptist Jnr. and Michael Guilfoyle were all members of the horticultural committee, a group charged with the floral display and layout of the external garden. Many exhibits were received for the horticultural categories, although regrettably there was a nil return in Class 364 ('six Agaves, distinct, open') and Class 376 ('the most suitable plant for edging purposes in Australia, to be laid in circles of three feet in diameter').

The Metropolitan Intercolonial Exhibition opened on 30 September 1870 and ran for a month. *Prince Alfred Park* was leased by the Agricultural Society of New South Wales for this purpose for two months each year and for the remaining ten months reverted to an area for public recreation. *Prince Alfred Park* had been named to commemorate the Duke of Edinburgh's visit: the first Royal visit to the Australian colonies. The Prince delighted the crowd at the 1870 exhibition when he 'kindly allowed his elephant to bivouac in the park'. His visit to Sydney was however, made infamous by an unsuccessful assassination attempt at Clontarf and the collective guilt of this outrage, and the pride in Queen Victoria's sanction of the visit, ensured a liberal sprinkling of eponymy.

The idea of an 'exhibition garden' was relatively new. The Great Exhibition of 1851, held in London's *Hyde Park*, took advantage of a pre-existing landscaped site. The Crystal Palace only stood there until 1852 when it was relocated to the south London suburb of Sydenham and the *Hyde Park* site reverted to its original park function. For the 1862 London Exhibition a site in South Kensington was selected and a number of pre-existing buildings were demolished. A garden of limited extent was included in the overall plan of the site, although the exhibition landscaping was quite formal in style. Neither of these London exhibitions contributed greatly to the development of the 'exhibition garden' as a genre. None of the Australian exhibitions of the 1850s or 60s had incorporated any significant landscaping, so *Prince Alfred Park* was the earliest park to be laid out in connection with a major Australian exhibition, predating the *Exhibition Gardens* in Carlton by ten years.

The Duke of Edinburgh kindly allowed his elephant to bivouac in the park for the amusement of visitors

In 1867 at Paris, the site of *L'Exposition Universelle* in *Champ de Mars* housed a huge oval building (later the site of the Eiffel Tower) set in an extensive landscaped garden. Curved paths of contrasting widths criss-crossed the grounds and picturesque pavilions were dotted across the site. This landscaping was the work of Jean Charles Adolphe Alphand, engineer of the *Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées* and builder of the great parks of Paris during the Second Empire. He is perhaps best remembered for his great work *Les Promenades de Paris*, published from 1867-73 in two elephant folio volumes, resplendent with

engraving and chromolithographs of the works, including the *Exposition Universelle* scheme.

The Alphandian Park, especially as exemplified by the 1867 exhibition landscaping, was very much a park for the machine age. This was not only due to the manner in which machinery was scattered through the exhibition grounds, but more subtly 'from the substitution of organic materials (rock, wood, stone) by materials produced by means of the new systems (steel, iron and cast iron)'. This concept was arguably inaugurated at the Crystal Palace grounds in Sydenham, where new landscaped grounds had been laid out by Paxton. On the site of a swamp, a lake had been created, the spoil used for an island where a representation of coal seams was incorporated in facsimile. Coal was the source of Britain's power, iron was smelted by the aid of coal and this symbolism of the machine age would not have been lost on an admiring London public of the 1850s. Machinery was also widely used by Alphand in construction of his parks: his tree-lifting gear transformed parks and boulevards overnight, and his techniques were emulated by admirers from William Robinson to William Guilfoyle.

At *Prince Alfred Park* such 'machine age' symbolism was represented by the close link with Sydney's railway station and in the Alphandian devices: outdoor reserves for working machinery, use of prefabricated metal components for lamp standards and drinking fountains, and in the disposition of crisply detailed pavilions with prismatic roof forms of iron. How different from the picturesque rusticity of the timber and shingled shelters of Sydney's Botanic Gardens at this period. In terms of Alphandian purity, however, the design of *Prince Alfred Park* was flawed. The awkward triangular site had a pre-existing school building in one corner which prevented incorporation of a true perimeter promenade. The

Panorama of Prince Alfred Park immediately prior to the opening of the 1870 Exhibition. Backhouse's pavilions are clearly seen in the foreground while the bandstand and refreshment pavilion can be seen in the middle distance.



AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Society was formed in 1980 with a view to bringing together all those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture, and related subjects.

It's primary concern is to promote interest in and research into historic gardens, as a major component of the National Estate. It is also concerned, through a study of garden history, with the promotion of proper standards of design and maintenance that will be relative to the needs of today, and with the conservation of valuable plants that are in danger of being lost to cultivation. It aims to look at garden making in its wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The benefits of membership include:

1. The Society's official journal six times a year.
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4. An opportunity to attend the Annual Conference, held in a different centre every year, combining visits to important public and private gardens with a variety of interesting speakers.
5. Knowing you are contributing to the conservation of important gardens as a component of the National Estate.



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- Note:**
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planting also made little impact until its second decade, by which time exhibitions had ceased at this site (having transferred to the Garden Palace in 1879). Use of tree-lifting equipment to transplant advanced trees was not used and it was left to William Guilfoyle to pioneer large scale usage of such machinery in Melbourne's Botanic Gardens several years later. Actual machinery also disappeared as a feature with the transfer of exhibitions in 1879, and the park assumed the role of a more conventional 'lung of the city'.

As the site of the first intercolonial exhibition in New South Wales, *Prince Alfred Park* was an important link in the chain of events leading to federation of the Australian colonies in 1901. Like federation, concern for the collective welfare of Australian citizens also fueled pressure for city parks. The Alphandian park of the nineteenth century was essentially a democratic park, unlike antecedents such as the eighteenth century English landscaped park which was private, not public. The new nineteenth century park provided an opportunity for recreation in areas dominated by small allotments and a large city workforce.

In the decades following the 1870 Exhibition, perimeter plantings in the park became a dominant feature. The timber paling fence that originally surrounded the park was replaced by a cast iron palisade fence. *Prince Alfred Park*, in both fence treatment and planting, was typical of central Sydney parks of the late nineteenth century, but the pathway layout along French curves and the siting of the ornate Exhibition Building represented a remarkable change in taste from the formality of other central Sydney parks of this time.

Along the Cleveland Street perimeter of the park regularly spaced specimens of Norfolk Island pines were attaining reasonable height. Alternating with these were

Moreton Bay figs, with an underplanting of brush box. This planting pattern became popular in Sydney parks during the late nineteenth century. The planting of Australian rainforest trees satisfied the prevailing botanical interests and provided a strong border of bold dark green foilage. Perhaps the most unusual planting in the park was the avenue of stone pines (*Pinus pinea*), that was planted between two paling fences along the park's boundary with the railway yards. The alignment of this avenue related to St. Paul's Church, near the southwest corner of the park, and the old Sydney Burial Grounds to the north. These trees may have been planned as a funery avenue.

The path layout, designed by Benjamin Backhouse, was maintained throughout the late nineteenth century. However, it is evident that the park experienced frequent flooding as the natural creekline that flowed through the park was largely ignored in the landscaping for the 1870 Exhibition. During the first decade of the twentieth century attempts were made to rectify the drainage problem in the park and implement a programme of general improvements. This was done under the so called 'City Beautifying Scheme' administered by the then Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. W.G. Layton. The excavation of the old Sydney Burial Grounds for the construction of Central Railway Station provided a large amount of earth that was used to fill up the depression that marked the course of the old stream. The terracing around the Exhibition Building and Main Entry Drive was mostly obliterated as a result of this filling. In addition, the park continued to suffer drainage problems as the fill only trapped the water between layers of clay in the lower portions of the park.

From the depression years to the present day the park has become barely recognisable as a major exhibition park





View of Prince Alfred Park c. 1880-90 clearly showing the original exhibition building of 1870 (designed by city engineer Bell and erected by contractor John Young) and the perimeter planting of Norfolk Island pines and Moreton Bay figs.

of the nineteenth century. The Exhibition Building which functioned as a roller skating rink, a military store during World War II, and later as the first Australian War Museum, gradually became derelict and was demolished in 1954 by the Sydney Municipal Council. In its place an ice skating rink and olympic swimming pool were built in 1959. Unfortunately these items obliterated the park layout and most of the perimeter plantings in this section of the park. As a result, avenues of trees in the southern portion of the park now appear to lead nowhere.

The decision of the Council of the City of Sydney to prepare a comprehensive plan of management and masterplan for *Prince Alfred Park* is a timely one. The historical analysis, statement of significance and subsequent conservation policies, are to be a major component of this plan.

It is envisaged that once again, an elegant building addressing the park as a whole will replace the now derelict ice skating rink. The path layout along French curves will be partially reconstructed and borders of Australian rainforest trees will be replanted. The reconstruction and restoration of the cast iron palisade fence with associated sandstone gate posts is also

proposed. The original sandstone base-wall still surrounds the park and is in good condition despite the removal, many decades ago, of the cast iron rods that formed the palisade fence.

The significance of *Prince Alfred Park* as an exhibiton park of the 'Machine Age', will be carried on into the future through the plan of management and masterplan. But most importantly the public function of the park as a vital area of open space in the rapidly developing southern portion of central Sydney will be ensured.

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The group will be met at Hobart Airport by a luxury coach and will proceed to the *Botanic Gardens* for a guided walk and lunch. Then a short drive to Campania to visit two interesting gardens belonging to the Barnett family. Each demonstrate solutions to the prevailing wind problems in this area; one with walls and hedges, the other by cultivating low growing alpine plants. From here a ten minute drive will bring the group to Richmond where a guided walk of this fascinating historic village will include the *Ross Garden* and afternoon tea. Return to Hobart for the evening.

Day Two

Commences with two *Fern Tree* gardens in the morning followed by a visit to the *Cascade Breweries Garden*, parts of which are 100 years old. After lunch we proceed to Sandy Bay to view two more gardens, one of which specialises in camellias.

Day Three

Today will be spent in the Bothwell region where Jill Bignall's garden at *Thorpe*, a deer park and a fully restored corn mill promise to be highlights. A luncheon in the village park will provide an opportunity for tour-goers to meet local AGHS members and will be followed by a guided tour of historic interests in Bothwell. Later, a visit to the historic garden of *Chmy* completes the day's activities.

Day Four

This promises to be a particularly scenic day as we follow the Channel Highway along the winding south coast with its marvelous views of the Derwent to Gay Klok's "other garden" at Middleton. Then across to Huonville and lunch in the *Sea Brook Gardens*. A visit to Ken Gillanders famous nursery at Longley follows and then Mrs Boyde's garden at Kingston. Finally the group returns to Mrs Klok's Sandy Bay home to view her lovely garden and enjoy 'special' refreshments.

Day Five

Today we leave the Hobart area and travel up the Midland Highway through Kempton, Jericho and Bagdad to Oatlands, one of the oldest midland townships, stopping briefly at one or two places of interest before reaching *Somercotes* at Ross. The very last stop is *Mona Vale* a very special property belonging to the Camerons who are very keen members of the Society. This is one of Tasmania's most interesting homes and gardens including a private chapel and extensive old glasshouses, all on a grand scale.

Rather than returning to Hobart the group will proceed to Launceston to enjoy some fresh scenery en route. Launceston Airport was created many years ago and is a garden in itself. Tour goers would then board their flights for home.

Important Tour Details

Evening activities have not been included above but a Hobart base for this tour has enabled us to provide an interesting selection of dinner venues and a visit to the Wrestpoint Casino after dinner one night will be an optional extra.

This tour again boasts an all inclusive price (for very comfortable accommodation, all meals, entrance fees, tour guides and coach travel) for the five days and four nights of \$585.00 per person. A single supplement fee of \$120 will apply if you require a private room.

Immediate Registration is ESSENTIAL as considerable interest for this itinerary has already been expressed and numbers will be restricted. Bookings will only be accepted upon receipt of a \$100 cheque with your completed booking form (located in the centre of this journal) sent to AGHS Tours — P.O. Box 972, Bowral, NSW 2576. For more detailed information please contact Diana Forrester or Leanne Timbs on (048) 87 1310.

Tour Video

A very special video of the beautiful gardens visited on the Bulbs and Blossoms Tour to Victoria's Western District (featured in this issue of the journal) is now available from this office. If you missed this wonderful tour, or if you want to rekindle your memories, please contact Diana Forrester or Leanne Timbs for more information about this unique video, artistically created for the Society by Mr Paul Birchall of Berrima, New South Wales.

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TOUR REPORT

Bulbs and Blossoms Tour Report 2-6 September 1989.

Brilliant sunshine, after weeks of rain, welcomed 45 AGHS members as we gathered in Melbourne to board the bus for our Western District adventure.

Greetings between old and new friends were warmly exchanged, together with a range of humorous tales about 'the horrors' of getting to Melbourne from all over Australia during the pilots dispute.

After a pleasant drive to Blackwood we arrived at *The Garden of St Erth*, where a most attractive 19th Century cottage is surrounded by extensive gardens nestled into a picturesque wooded hillside. Tom Garnett, noted garden historian, welcomed the group to his garden. Members were impressed by the diversity of the planting and by the meticulous care taken in labeling.

At the *Mineral Springs Park* in Blackwood a delicious bar-b-cue lunch awaited. A special treat was savoring the crystal clear mineral water which bubbled out of the mountain.

At the *Ballarat Botanical Gardens* we were made to feel very welcome by the Friends of the Botanical Gardens who took small groups on a conducted tour just as the sun was setting over the lake adjacent to the gardens.

Next morning we departed early and visited the large suburban garden of *Asblea*. The owner gave us a detailed explanation of some of her more exotic plants and we were delighted to discover a sleeping koala in one of *Asblea's* splendid eucalypts.

A short drive to Buninyong and to *Eyre Cottage* where Elizabeth Gilfillan, keen society member, made our group welcome. The superb 19th Century cottage and garden demonstrated how sympathetically modern developments, such as a new tennis court and herb garden can be introduced into a historic setting.

Mount Boninyong, near Scotsburn, was next. This large house with its extensive grounds is still owned by descendants of the Scott family who settled there in the 1840s. We were fascinated by some of the original plantings, recorded in family notebooks from as early as 1845. Here,



Mrs Celia Burnham explains to Mick Dexter, and others gathered on the driveway at Mount Boninyong, part of the complex work necessary after a massive cedar came down in a recent storm.

emphasis was placed on the complications inherent in maintaining an important historic garden.

The afternoon was spent exploring the recreated gold mining settlement of *Sovereign Hill* including a special guided walk around the recreated gardens.

The following morning we visited *Mawallock* at Beaufort. The owner, and Society Chairperson, Jocelyn Mitchell welcomed us.

This extensive Guilfoyle garden was far more beautiful than we could have anticipated. Special features included the natural spring which pumps an amazing 10,000 gallons per hour from its 19th Century pumphouse.

The immaculate plant nursery adjacent to the gardens proved too tempting for most of us and we had to find room in the coach for our purchases. Lunch here maintained the standard of fine food in fabulous settings.

Banongill, with its rushing stream and sea of daffodils, fulfilled the promise of Wordsworth's poem which appeared on the front cover of our tour booklets:

"When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

The Enda Walling garden *Naringal* was the perfect end to a perfect day.

Next morning, at *Keyham*, on the outskirts of Camperdown, we saw a four-acre field of Leonard Buckland daffodils planted about 80 years ago. *Talindert*, built in 1889 by the Manifold family, is surrounded by extensive grounds attributed to Guilfoyle. This visit was particularly interesting because Richard Barley, who completed



The spectacular display of daffodils at "Banongill". The gracious homestead is viewed, from the footbridge which leads across a stream to fabulous walks, amongst acres of daffodils and trees stretching as far as the eye can see in both directions!



Enjoying yet another sumptuous feast. L. to R. Gay Stanton (Sydney), Helena and John Bagot (Stirling), Phyllis and Ken Hoskins (Burradoo, NSW) with AGHS Executive Officer Diana Forrester (Boural, NSW).

exhaustive studies on the gardens earlier this year on an AGHS tertiary student grant, lectured to the group and conducted a most interesting tour of the grounds.

Turkeith and *Murdeduke*, our next two gardens, were also memorable. *Turkeith* has been of particular interest to the Society during recent times since the Victorian committee became involved in assisting in its rescue by listing its plantings and rediscovering and clearing original pathways.

Our last day and two Two National Trust properties in Geelong were visited this morning, *Barwon Grange* and *The Heights*.

After lunch at *The Heights* our final stop was *Werribee Park*. The gardens are extensive and well maintained, and proved an excellent way to finish our tour.

We returned to Melbourne, bade fond farewells to old and new friends amidst promises to write, and to meet again on another tour soon and compare memories of wonderful gardens, picnics and plants.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER 1989

Queensland

Thursday, November 9

Branch Meeting at *Mount Coot — tba*
Botanic Gardens

Information: Branch Secretary

Tasmania

Sunday November 12

Plant Fair at *Elsmere*

Fundraising event. Members donate unusual plants, cuttings and produce . . . great fun.

ACT/Monaro/Riverina — N.S.W.

Sunday November 12

Lanyon Spring Fair/Plant Sale

Information: Ingrid Adler (062) 31 4919

ACT/Monaro/Riverina — N.S.W.

Sunday November 19 10.30 am-4.00 pm

Visit to four gardens in the Nimmitabel and Cooma region. The gardens are:

Nandawar (Mr & Mrs Herbert). Natural garden designed around huge granite boulders. Designed 1959.

Sbirley (Mr & Mrs G. Cottle). Designed by Claude Gowe of Berrima in 1946. Lunch in garden.

Red Cliff (Mr & Mrs E. Kater). Informal garden designed in 1949 by Mrs G. Campbell. House designed by Walter Bunning in 1949. Afternoon tea.

Cloyne Garden and Nursery (Mrs Pfeiffer).

Features old roses in a formal setting and a chance to purchase precious plants.

Local accommodation available in Cooma
Information: Sue Jardine (064) 54 6210

Registration: Booking form and s.a.e. to AGHS, GPO Box 1630, Canberra 2601 by 10 November.

DECEMBER 1989

Victoria

Thursday December 7

Christmas Party at Fairfield Boathouse for all the family

Cost: approx \$20

Information: Diana Renou (03) 417 3734

Queensland

Saturday December 9

Christmas outing and picnic

Location: to be decided

Information: John Harrison (07) 832 3590

Southern N.S.W.

Date: to be decided

Christmas party. A family get-together for members and friends to celebrate the Christmas season.

Location: to be advised

Information: Helen Andersson (048) 86 4337 or Peggy Stone (048) 87 1243

South Australia

Tuesday December 5

Christmas drinks at the home of Mrs Laura Harrison, 61 Downing St, Hove. Members and their guests are welcomed to view this delightful garden near the beach displaying a surprisingly wide variety of plants.

Time: 5.30 pm

Cost: \$5 per person

Send booking slip to Branch Secretary

Queensland

Sunday 10 December

Visit to old gardens in the Corinda area and the Sherwood Arboretum. The day is starting at 10.00 am at 511 Honour Avenue, Sherwood at Pat Lewis' garden. B.Y.O. picnic lunch to share around.

Information: John Harrison (07) 832 3590

LETTERS

Dear Peter

I did enjoy Helen Vellacott's article in the August/September Journal. While the current emphasis on garden history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is most welcome, I find considerable interest in history of the more recent past, particularly where — as in Mrs Vellacott's article — it has to do with *people*. Her evocation of the significance of the magnolia blooms at *Simla*, both to Dorothy Cotterell's heroine in the 1920s and to herself in 1941 on that last leave with her husband, was really lovely.

It is vital to try and document gardening happenings of the 1930s, 40s, 50s and even 60s before they pass from living memory. In research for a book I am writing on the landscape architect, Ellis Stones, I have been most surprised how little "hard" evidence is to be found for projects where, given the procedures current today, one would expect some kind of record to exist (e.g. Stones's 1960s work in the Royal Botanic Gardens, at Como in South Yarra, for Merchant Builders).

The best way to find out what really happened is to talk to the people involved. This can be not only interesting, but tremendous fun. Let's do it, and record it, before it's too late!

With best wishes,

Anne Latreille

South Yarra, Victoria

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STATE AND NATIONAL NEWS

ACT/MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH

last month an informal lecture was given by Mr Victor Crittenden on *The Influence of Australian Garden Publications on Gardens*.

The AGM was held on September 2, 1989, and the current Committee was re-elected with all office bearers remaining the same except for our newsletter editor, Barry Griffiths. The meeting was followed by a talk from Murray Fagg, on *The History of the Australian National Botanic Gardens*, followed by a guided tour.

QUEENSLAND BRANCH

The AGM was held on August 10. The election of a new group of office bearers demonstrated the growing enthusiasm for garden history in Queensland.

During the year the group visited a number of sites including the *Brisbane Botanic Gardens*, the oldest surviving gardens in Queensland formed in 1842, *St Helena*, the ruins of an island prison in Moreton Bay established in 1874, and a number of old gardens and parks in Ipswich.

The coming year promises to be an exciting one with outings tentatively planned to the historic gardens of Buderim, Mt Tamborine, Beaudesert and the Brisbane River Valley.

Any members who could recommend gardens to visit in these districts should contact John Harrison.

Restoration of 19th Century Maze

The Branch is restoring Australia's only known surviving 19th century maze, located in the Belair Recreation Park (National Park) for the Park's centenary in 1991.

A guided visit to the maze was held on August 13. The restoration is progressing well and all undergrowth and weed trees have been cleared.

Propagation of Hawthorn to replant missing sections is now underway and the area will be fenced this summer. The restoration is being assisted by several community groups, funding from the National Estate Grants Programme and the AGHS.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/ SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

The AGM was held on August 17. Elections were held for new office bearers. Congratulations to Peggy Stone on being elected President. Also to Kate Gay and Libby Webster — Vice Presidents, Helen Andersson — Secretary, and Janet Payne — Treasurer. The Committee is currently putting together a full agenda of activities for 1990 and always welcome any suggestions that local members might have. A most informative talk was given by Michael Bligh about *Featuring The Front Entrance Of Your Property*.

On September 1, seventy members gathered in the gracious baronial hall of Mount Broughton Country Resort at Sutton Forrest for a lecture by Mrs Betty Hoskins. Betty's light hearted approach presented a delightfully warm look at the Hoskins' family gardens.

SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

The Sydney committee is very eager to hold a full calendar of events in 1990 and urgently seeks willing assistants to participate in planning and co-ordinating activities next year. Interested members are asked to please contact Robin Lewarne, on (02) 953 1916.

TASMANIAN BRANCH

The AGM was held on August 20. Mrs Fairie Nielsen was re-elected Chairperson and Robert Roberts Treasurer. We enjoyed a talk by Mr John Grey on the subject of *PERENNIALS*, particularly relating to varieties to suit Tasmanian conditions.

VICTORIAN BRANCH

Rose Pruning

On August 6, seventy members attended the second annual Rose Pruning Day at Bleak House, Susan Irvine's rose garden.

We thank Susan for her help and for making the delightful venue available.

New Project Officer

The National Trust of Australia (Vic) is shortly to appoint a Gardens Project Officer to assist in its work in assessing Victoria's historic gardens. The Trust has approached the Branch to liaise with the new officer and its garden committee.

Von Mueller's Correspondence

On August 29, the Branch shared a meeting with the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens at which Professor Rod Home spoke on *The Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller*. Professor Home discussed the collecting and collating of the correspondence and of the international co-operation required for a project of this size. Mueller was a prolific letter writer and a very significant figure in the scientific world of the nineteenth century.

We thank the Friends for their hospitality at the National Herbarium.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH

On October 15, members had the opportunity of viewing three private gardens in the historic town of York, about 100 kilometres east of Perth. The gardens were, a remnant 19th century garden, Laurelville and Tipperary Church.

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in its wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this Journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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